

**Fairfax County Community-Wide Energy and
Climate Action Plan (CECAP)
Transportation and Development Sub-Group Meeting
Meeting Notes**

Transportation and Development Strategy Discussion #3

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Held electronically via WebEx and Mural

Fairfax County held a CECAP Working Group Transportation and Development Subgroup meeting on March 25th from 6:00-8:00pm. The meeting was held electronically via WebEx and included a prioritization of strategies using Mural, an online whiteboard.

Recordings of the meeting and meeting materials, including the full WebEx chat transcript, [are available online](#).

These meeting notes capture the general activities conducted and discussions that occurred during the meeting. These notes should be viewed in conjunction with the presentation and meeting materials, found at the link above.

[Welcome and Overview \(Candace Blair Cronin, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX\)](#)

Legal requirements: A script was read to cover several legal requirements for holding electronic meetings. The script included conducting a roll call identifying all CECAP working group members in attendance and where they were attending from. It was noted that to conduct this meeting electronically, the meeting needs to be clearly audible, publicly accessible, and compelled by emergency circumstances. It was established that this meeting could not be held in person due to the COVID-19 emergency, and that therefore it could instead be held electronically via audio-conferencing. It was also established that this meeting is necessary to move forward the CECAP Working Group's functions.

The meeting purpose was reviewed, focusing on the following goals:

- Review key takeaways from the Mural Brainstorming Matrix.
- Review of Impacts Discussion Starter & Prioritization Matrix.
- Prioritize and discuss strategies and actions to inform their level of emphasis and their narrative in the CECAP report.
- Discuss sector-based and interim goals.
- Decide on whether a March meeting Part II is needed on March 31.

Candace Cronin then reviewed tips for using the WebEx chat function.

Finally, Maya Dhavale reviewed the CECAP timeline, including progress so far and where we are now in March, which is the discussion and prioritization stage. She noted that in the next step will be drafting the report and continuing public engagement. She reviewed information gathered at the February Public Feedback Sessions and noted that review of the latest survey information is in progress.

Slides are available here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/cecap-transportation-meeting-march-25-2021>

Key Takeaways from Brainstorming Comments Matrix (Adam Agalloco, ICF)

Adam provided a description of the Brainstorming Comments Matrix, which provides a summary of every comment made in Mural at the previous meetings, frequency counts to help understand level of interest in different topics, and recategorization to ensure ideas were aligned with the correct strategies.

The top 3 commented actions/technologies within each sector included the following:

- Building & Energy Efficiency – Stricter building code adoption & enforcement, green infrastructure, combined heat and power/district energy
- Energy Supply – Solar (photovoltaic & community solar), geothermal, wind
- Transportation – Expanding transit routes & trails/connectivity, improving safety, density/walkability
- Waste –Waste reduction (reduce, reuse, repair), recycling, composting
- Forestry – Tree planting, conservation, urban greenspace

Adam noted that the takeaways are not meant to reflect the Working Group's priorities, which were discussed later on in the meeting.

Adam provided a review of key terms including sector, strategy, action, implementation, and impacts. He noted that based on the Mural brainstorming sessions, there was a strong interest in incentive programs, county programs, and education/outreach as implementation methods. Adam also noted that the CECAP is intended for voluntary and community action – there are other initiatives focused more on reducing emissions from Fairfax County government and school operations.

Impacts with high interest include health and environmental justice, social and racial equity, cost, economic opportunity, and GHG reductions.

Review of Prioritization Discussion Starter & Prioritization Matrix (ICF)

Adam Agalloco reviewed the Strategy Framework document, with a focus on the six strategies within the categories of Transportation, Development, and Waste. Adam also reviewed the Impacts Discussion Starter document, which provides background information and an initial framework for considering the impacts of various strategies and actions.

Adam also reviewed goal-related terminology, including reduction goal/target goal/long term goal, interim goal, and sector-specific goals. He noted that the current long-term goal is carbon neutrality by 2050, with at least 87% coming from emissions reductions from a 2005 base year. He reviewed initial results of GHG modeling, and a potential pathway to an 87% emissions reduction by 2050 from a 2005 base year.

Comment: What other “authorities” are included (or not included) in the CECAP plan? (e.g., Fairfax Water Authority and Fairfax County Park Authority)

- Fairfax County Park Authority would fall under the umbrella of the County government, so it is not considered in the community-wide plan. The Water Authority is separate from County government, so they would play a slightly different role.

Comment: The CECAP strategies include voluntary actions as the County has limited authority on what can currently be mandated due to the Dillon Rule. Many of the CECAP strategies have associated voluntary actions that individuals can take to improve Fairfax County’s climate action. However, CECAP also has strategies and actions that rely on county, state and Federal involvement, for example certain land-use decisions which come from the Board of Supervisors could be mandated at the county-level. Further comments about the voluntary nature of the plan can be found in the [WebEx chat transcript](#).

Comment: Where does in-fill housing fit into these strategies?

- This action is captured in multiple strategies, including transportation (supporting efficient land-use and TDM) and land-use (preservation of natural resources). While GHG reductions from in-fill housing are not explicitly estimated in any of the strategies, the benefits of in-fill housing are an important consideration for achieving the carbon neutral goal.

Comment: When estimating the reductions from each strategy, what percentage of people did you assume will comply with each action?

- It varies based on the strategy, in general we estimated GHG reductions by applying the technical potential of full implementation for each strategy (as compared to a business-as-usual case). The assumptions underlying “full implementation” are based on discussions from previous meetings and actions prioritized by Working Group members.

Prioritization of Strategies and Actions (Candace Cronin and Adam Agalloco, ICF)

Adam Agalloco reviewed the prioritization process of emphasizing and/or de-emphasizing strategies using Mural, and Candace Cronin led an exercise to practice the process in Mural.

[Please click here to view the Mural board from this meeting.](#) Please note that this board is locked for editing. Any comments added to the board were not recorded or considered after March 25, 2021.

Each participant was given 6 votes to indicate a preference for emphasizing a strategy and a separate 6 votes to indicate a preference for de-emphasizing a strategy. The Mural platform uses the term “vote”, but this exercise was meant to indicate preferences rather than serve as a formal vote of the Working Group.

The exercise results are below. Please note that some “votes” were accidentally cast on items on the Mural board other than strategies, so these votes are not included in the vote counts below.

- Vote counts to emphasize the strategy, in order of most votes to least.
 - 46 votes - Strategy #8: Support efficient land use, active and public transportation, and transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce VMT
 - 23 votes - Strategy #12: Support preservation, restoration, and expansion of Fairfax County’s natural systems and public spaces
 - 17 votes each - Strategy #7: Increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption, and Strategy #9: Increase fuel economy and use of low carbon fuels for transportation
 - 13 votes – Strategy #10: Reduce the amount of waste generated and divert waste from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities
 - 7 votes - Strategy #11: Responsibly manage all waste generated

- Vote counts to de-emphasize the strategy, in order of most votes to least.
 - 23 votes - Strategy #11: Responsibly manage all waste generated
 - 19 votes each - Strategy #10: Reduce the amount of waste generated and divert waste from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities, and Strategy #9: Increase fuel economy and use of low carbon fuels for transportation
 - 4 votes - Strategy #8: Support efficient land use, active and public transportation, and transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce VMT
 - 3 votes - Strategy #7: Increase electric vehicle (EV)
 - 2 votes - Strategy #12: Support preservation, restoration, and expansion of Fairfax County's natural systems and public spaces

A summary of comments of the emphasis/de-emphasis exercise from the verbal discussion as well as from the WebEx chat are provided below. [Please click here to view the full WebEx chat transcript.](#)

Comment: EV adoption (Strategy #7) still encourages the use of cars and all the associated infrastructure that is required to support cars (e.g., asphalt, impervious surfaces), so I would de-emphasize that strategy.

Comment: Increasing the number of EVs is important, but it really depends on what the County plans to do to encourage adoption regarding Strategy #7 (e.g., incentives such as reduced requirements for emissions inspections, rebates).

Comment: I put all my votes on Strategy #8 because the GHG reductions associated with land-use reform and active transportation are significant, so I'm very happy to see that this was a popular strategy.

Comment: Strategy #8 encompasses a lot of different actions to achieve the same goal: reducing VMT. The fact that no one "de-emphasized" it speaks volumes.

Comment: We need to be careful with Strategy #8 – study from VCU showed that most of the job centers are far from affordable housing. Lower-income people often have no choice but to travel by car to find employment, so it is important to locate job centers near affordable housing.

Comment: What is the possibility of Fairfax County actually implementing these strategies? I would argue that for Strategy #8, the possibility is very high.

Comment: I also put all of my votes into Strategy #8. Strategy #8 makes up almost half of transportation emissions reductions, but only 12% of the total. I think we would want to increase the % of reductions from Strategy #8, so it plays a bigger role.

Comment: Strategy #9 is a good intermediary step (i.e., increasing fuel efficiency helps reduce GHGs even if people aren't going out and buying a brand-new EV).

Comment: "Low carbon doesn't equal no carbon" is a good way to summarize Strategy #9. There is no way to fully know the environmental impacts of low-carbon fuels, so maybe this should be less of a focus area.

Comment: I de-emphasized Strategy #10 because although many people think about reducing waste in relation to environmentalism, the actual GHG impact is not overly large. Efforts should be spent on other areas with higher impact.

Comment: There are a lot of co-benefits to the waste reduction strategy.

Adam noted that the results and feedback received in today's exercises will be used to develop the narrative of the CECAP plan and reflect minor changes to the modeling. After this discussion, the strategies and actions are considered the final product of this subgroup. There will also be an opportunity to review the draft report and ensure that it accurately reflects the discussions of the subgroup.

[Sector-Based & Interim Goals Discussion \(Adam Agalloco, ICF\)](#)

Adam Agalloco provided a review of the GHG inventory and GHG modeling results to provide context for sector-based and interim goal setting. The purpose of this discussion was to prepare the group for a formal vote on sector-based goals at the next meeting of the full Working Group.

The first question up for discussion was whether or not the group wanted to set sector-based goals. The general consensus was that yes sector-based goals are useful, as they help make it easier to measure and adjust actions as needed.

- Comment: Setting sector-specific goals helps to ensure that we stay on track and meet the specific reduction targets.
- Comment: What is the purpose of distinguishing between strategies and sector-specific goals? It appears we are just talking about the same thing in two different ways – combining the individual strategy reductions from a specific sector is essentially the same as setting an overall sector-level goal.
 - It can be useful to track sector-based goals using different metrics than just GHG reductions (e.g., increase the percentage of commuters that use public transportation by 20%)
- Comment: Can we have both types of goals, GHG reduction targets and other metrics (like # of commuters using public transit)?
 - Yes, it's possible, but it could be a bit confusing. It may be more useful to set specific goals that are attainable and specifically related to GHGs.

Wrap Up & Provide Meeting Feedback (Candace Cronin, ICF and Maya Dhavale, FFX)

Candace Cronin suggested meeting times for the setting of sector-based and interim goals, with a tentative date of March 31st.

- There were mixed responses, some wanted a second meeting, but others felt it was not necessary or said they would not be available on the 31st.

Candace Cronin reviewed meeting objectives, and requested feedback on communications, meeting length, meeting information, and ability for everybody to participate. Finally, Maya Dhavale reviewed ways to stay informed on the CECAP process, as well as ways to reach out and stay involved.